



City of Burlington

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AB 57 (53X)

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MANAGEMENT
STB

May 21, 2003

SEA, Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

#E1-247
RA

**Re: Request for Comments on Potential Environmental Impacts of Proposed Line
Abandonment Located between Mile Post 18.43 +/- and Mile Post 25.93 +/-, in Racine
County, State of Wisconsin (U.S. Postal Zip Codes 53139 and 53105) - STB Docket No.:
AB-57 (Sub-No. 53X)**

To Whom It May Concern:

Pursuant to an April 28, 2003 letter sent to Mayor Lois, City of Burlington, regarding the above referenced matter I am submitting the comments herein on behalf of the City Council to the Surface Transportation Board (STB). Our understanding of the issue is that the Soo Line's proposed action includes discontinuing freight service and salvaging equipment and materials that are present on the line; and, that all that remains in the hands of the Soo Line is an easement for railroad purposes. Further, per the referenced April 28, 2003 letter the Racine County Regional Rail Authority (RCRRA) supports the abandonment of this line of railroad. Could you please advise me how to contact the RCRRA?

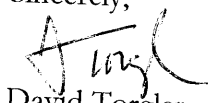
Comments regarding the proposed rail abandonment.

1. Per 49 CFR Ch. X (10-1-02 Edition) Section 1105.7(e)(3)(iv) Racine County, Walworth County and the City of Burlington have been working to establish a rails-to-trails system as well as bicycle and pedestrian trails for congestion mitigation air quality improvements. Future use of the abandoned line as part of these alternative transportation systems should be considered, supported and allowed as an asset to the communities and to the local air quality by the STB, RCRRA and Soo Line.
2. Per 49 CFR Ch. X (10-1-02 Edition) Section 1105.7(e)(11)(vi) currently State Trunk Highway (STH) 142 is constructed as a Soo Line railroad overpass. Due to the maintenance expense and additional fuel expenditure for highway traffic to use this overpass we request that the STB, RCRRA and Soo Line not object to a future removal of the overpass structure, by others, and permit STH 142 an at-grade crossing at or near the same location.
3. Part of the proposed line abandonment consists of a railroad trestle bridge over the Fox River that has been utilized in the past by high school students seeking a walkway to and

from the high school. While the City does not condone this use it shows not only that the requested use of the abandoned line as an alternative transportation system will work it also demonstrates the possible need to leave the trestle bridge in place (see item 1 above). We would request that the STB, RCRA and Soo Line support working with the Racine County Highway Department regarding the future use or demolition of the railroad trestle bridge over the Fox River. Further, by not removing this structure, that may cause a need in the future to construct a new structure, the future disruption to nesting areas of the River Red Horse, a threatened species in the State of Wisconsin, will be avoided. In no case should a dilapidated structure be allowed to remain.

If you have any questions regarding the above please do not hesitate to contact me at 262-342-1161. Further, we request that this letter be entered into the record for any proceedings affecting the proposed line abandonment proceedings and that the City of Burlington be notified of any future actions or proceedings. Thank you for your consideration of these requests.

Sincerely,



David Torgler
City Administrator

- c. Samantha Kerkman, State Representative
- Bill McReynolds, Racine County Executive
- Glen Lampark, Racine County Highway Department
- Cecil Mehring, Racine County Highway Department
- Larry Gobel, Supervisor, Streets and Parks
- Tom Foht, Kapur & Associates, Inc., City Engineer
- Tim Flynn, Kapur & Associates, Inc.
- Diane Baumeister, Administrator, Town of Burlington
- Rick Raupp, WisDOT Planning